

TESTIMONY OF CHARLES WILTSHIRE
ON
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S PROPOSED RULE
"GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICIAN PANEL
DETERMINATIONS OF WORKER REQUESTS FOR
ASSISTANCE IN
FILING FOR STATE WORKERS' COMPENSATION
BENEFITS"

RADISSON HOTEL CINCINNATI AIRPORT

OCTOBER 25, 2001

Charles Wiltshire

Good afternoon, I am Charles Wiltshire, a production Process Operator at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant located near Portsmouth, Ohio. I have worked at the plant for 29 years.

It is now an admitted fact by DOE that my co-workers and I was exposed to toxic chemicals with little or no monitoring. It is a fact, that exposure data has been manipulated to show little or no exposure. It is admitted that these exposures cause illness and death. These are admitted facts.

The tragic part is trying to maintain faith in a country I took an oath to defend with my life if need be. Imagine a young man 21 years old in the height of the cold war going to work at only facility that enriched uranium to a very high assay for his country's nuclear needs.

This first time I walk into a process building I was amazed at the apparent overall cleanliness of the facilities. My supervisor told me the floors are so clean you could eat off them. My experience with factories at this was limited to a dirty shoe factory.

In my first 15 years as process operator at the plant, we were not allowed to wear company issue clothing and worked everyday in our personal clothing, which was worn home. I felt safe because DOE regulations guaranteed me a safe work place.

As I matured I soon found out that for DOE to regulate their own facility was like having the **"fox guard the hen house."** The floors were not clean enough to eat off of. The contamination that causes illness and death was not anything like the cow manure you got into on the farm and could wash off with soap and water.

Now comes congress, and passes a law to compensate workers and atone for DOE's sins. I still have faith in my country, they are going to make things right.

Somehow DOE must again set the rules to regulate and administer the compensation. Why are you trying to overthrow the will of the Congress. Reading these proposed rules reminds me of something. My granddad would say, "Fellows the bale of wool you're trying to pull over my eyes is 2/3's cotton."

What good is a Physician Panel to determine whether the illness arose out of employment by a DOE contractor if the Program Office must makes the decision. How can the Physician Panel review a claim they never see.

Then what good is it to have the Physician Panel to make a determination and then have the Program Manager not accept their determination?

In fact why even have a Physicians Panel if the Program Manager makes all the determinations?

Once again we have the Fox (DOE) guarding the hen house (Workers compensation program).